

# Speaker Bios

## Conveners and IMTF Advisory Board

### **Martin Nguyen, Fairfield University ([mnguyen@fairfield.edu](mailto:mnguyen@fairfield.edu))**

Conference convener, Islamic Moral Theology and the Future (Principal Investigator)

Martin Nguyen is Professor of Islamic Studies and Chair of the Religious Studies Department at Fairfield University. His work revolves around Islamic theology and ethics, the Qur'an and its interpretation, Sufism, and the intersection of race and religion. His latest book *Modern Muslim Theology: Engaging God and the World with Faith and Imagination* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018) presents a contemporary theology rooted in the practice of the religious imagination. He is also the author of *Sufi Master and Qur'an Scholar: Abū'l-Qāsim al-Qushayri and the Latā'if al-ishārāt* (Oxford, 2012), which explores the confluence of Sufism, theology, and Qur'anic hermeneutics in the life and works of an eleventh-century mystic and scholar.

### **Maria Dakake ([mdakakem@gmu.edu](mailto:mdakakem@gmu.edu))**

Conference convener, Islamic Moral Theology and the Future (Principal Investigator)

Maria Massi Dakake is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. She currently serves as director of the AbuSulayman Center for Global Islamic Studies and is the director of the undergraduate interdisciplinary Islamic Studies program at GMU. Her research interests and publications lie in the fields of Islamic intellectual history, with a particular interest in Qur'anic studies, Shi'i and Sufi traditions, and women's religious experiences. She is co-editor of the *Routledge Companion to the Qur'an* (2021); associate editor and co-author of *The Study Qur'an* (2015); and author of *The Charismatic Community: Shi'ite Identity in Early Islam* (SUNY Press, 2008). She is currently completing a monograph, *Toward an Islamic Theory of Religion* (forthcoming 2024) and working on a partial translation of a Qur'an commentary by the 20<sup>th</sup> c. Iranian religious scholar, Nusrat Amin.

### **Ahmet Alibasić, University of Sarajevo ([ahmet.alibasic@fin.unsa.ba](mailto:ahmet.alibasic@fin.unsa.ba))**

IMTF Advisory Board member, local faculty convener, closing keynote speaker

### **Mohammad Suheyl Umar, Iqbal Academy ([msuheylumar@gmail.com](mailto:msuheylumar@gmail.com))**

IMTF advisory board member

### **Ahmet Tekelioglu ([atekelio@gmu.edu](mailto:atekelio@gmu.edu))**

*Maydan* Editor / IMTF editorial and publication assistance

Ahmet Selim Tekelioglu is Editor-in-Chief of *Maydan*, the online publication site for George Mason University's AbuSulayman Center for Global Islamic Studies. Tekelioglu holds a PhD in Political Science from Boston University and a Masters in International Relations from Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. His research focuses on American religious landscape, politics of ethno-religious identities, Muslim minorities in the West, and international relations theories. From 2013 to 2015 Ahmet Selim directed the Los Angeles leg of the Public Ethics and Citizenship in Plural Societies Project with Contending Modernities program at Notre Dame University.

### **Keynote Speaker:**

#### **Enes Karić, University of Sarajevo ([dreneskarić@hotmail.com](mailto:dreneskarić@hotmail.com))**

Enes Karić (born 1958 in Travnik, Bosnia and Herzegovina) is a professor of Qur'anic and Islamic Studies at Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Sarajevo. From 1994-1996 he served as Minister of Education and Science in the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2003, he was elected to the position of the Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Sarajevo, serving in this position until 2007. Dr. Karić has delivered lectures at Yale University, as well as at various universities in Ljubljana, Boston, Zagreb, Istanbul, and Leiden. During the 2008-2009 academic year, he was the Allianz Guest Professor of Islamic Studies at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. He has published dozens of books on the hermeneutics of the Qur'an, modern trends in Islam, and Islam and Europe among other topics. He is also the author of several well-received novels, including: *Songs of Wild Birds*, *The Jewish Cemetery*, *Man by Accident*, *Cherry Colors*, *God's Slaves*.

### **Panel Speakers**

#### **Mohammed Gamal Abdelnour, University of York ([mohammed.metaweia@york.ac.uk](mailto:mohammed.metaweia@york.ac.uk))**

Dr Mohamed Gamal Abdelnour is a lecturer of Islamic theology and philosophy at the Faculty of Uṣūl al-Dīn, Al-Azhar University (Cairo) and an honorary research fellow at the Department of philosophy, University of York, U.K. Gamal received his primary, secondary and undergraduate education at Al-Azhar, where he memorized the Qur'ān at the age of eleven, deeply studied the various disciplines of the Arabic and Islamic tradition, and graduated as valedictorian of his class with a bachelor's in Islamic Studies and Philosophy in 2011 (Al-Azhar University, Cairo). He holds an MA in Catholic Theology (Durham University, U.K.) and a PhD in Comparative Theology (SOAS University of London). He is the author of *A Comparative History of Catholic and Ash'ari Theologies of Truth and Salvation: Inclusive Minorities, Exclusive Majorities* (Brill, 2021) and *The Higher Objectives of Islamic Theology: Towards a Theory of Maqāṣid al-'Aqā'id* (Oxford University Press, 2022). He is also a fellow of the Oxford Interfaith Forum.

#### **Ismail Alatas, New York University ([ifa200@nyu.edu](mailto:ifa200@nyu.edu))**

Ismail Fajrie Alatas is associate professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, and History at New York University. He is an associate editor of the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society and a fellow of The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Jordan. He holds Ph.D. in Anthropology and History from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is the author of *What is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic communities in Indonesia* (Princeton, 2021) and is currently working on a new project that explores the relationship between religion, spatiality, and geography by looking at a transoceanic moral geography that links Southeast Asia to South Arabia.

#### **Tazeen Ali, Washington University in St. Louis ([tazeen.ali@wustl.edu](mailto:tazeen.ali@wustl.edu))**

Tazeen M. Ali is a scholar of Islam and gender in the United States and assistant professor at the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics at Washington University in St. Louis. She holds a PhD in Religious Studies from Boston University and an MA in Islamic Studies from Washington University in St. Louis. She is the author of *The Women's Mosque of America: Authority & Community in US Islam* (NYU Press, 2022).

#### **Khairudin Aljunied, University of Singapore ([malsasmk@nus.edu.sg](mailto:malsasmk@nus.edu.sg))**

Dr. Khairudin Aljunied (PhD SOAS, London) is Associate Professor at the National University of Singapore and Senior Fellow (formerly and Professor as well as Malaysia Chair of Islam in Southeast

Asia at the Alwaleed Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University). He was also a visiting professor at Columbia University, USA (Fulbright Program) in 2013 and University of Brunei Darussalam in 2022-2023. A recognized specialist in the field of intellectual history, his research focuses on the connections between Southeast Asia and Global Islam. He is the author and editor of thirteen books and more than thirty internationally refereed articles. Recent publications include *Muslim Cosmopolitanism: Southeast Asian Islam in Comparative Perspective* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), *Hamka and Islam: Cosmopolitan Reform in the Malay World* (Cornell University Press, 2018), *Islam in Malaysia: An Entwined History* (Oxford University Press, 2019), and *Shapers of Islam in Southeast Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022). His upcoming book is entitled *Contemplating Sufism: Histories of a Dialogical Tradition in Southeast Asia*.

**Maryam Eskandari, MIIM Designs ([eskandari@miimdesigns.com](mailto:eskandari@miimdesigns.com))**

Maryam Eskandari is a designer (architect) and an educator. In 2013, she founded MIIM Designs, a practice dedicated to community engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration and design innovation through the use of local and traditional materials. Under her leadership, MIIM has been a two-time recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Award, the Doris Duke Foundation Award, National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Library and Museums. Maryam is the 2009-2011 recipient of the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture Award. In 2014 Maryam was a recipient for the Women Entrepreneur Award at the White House under President Barack Obama; the recipient of the 2016 Cambridge Judge Business School Rothschild Prize, and the recipient of the 2005 J. Douglas Mac Neil Architecture Memorial Prize. Maryam received her masters in from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) School of Architecture and Planning, while doing extensive work on restoration and heritage preservation on Homayoun's Tomb in India and researching in history and theory on mosques. Maryam was the founding Board of Open Architecture Collaborative – a non-profit working in underserved communities and the Harvard Iranian Alumni Association, and currently a Board member of Harvard's FDR Foundation, CleanAcwa in Accra Ghana, and the 1947 Partition Archives of India. She has taught at Boston Architectural College (BAC), Harvard University, and currently, is the Nature's Conservancy (TNC) Capstone Thesis Professor at Cal Poly (Pomona).

**Maryam Kashani, University of Illinois ([mkashani@illinois.edu](mailto:mkashani@illinois.edu))**

Maryam Kashani is a filmmaker and associate professor in Gender and Women's Studies and Asian American Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is an affiliate with Anthropology, Media and Cinema Studies, the Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, and the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory. Her book *Medina by the Bay: Scenes of Muslim Study and Survival* (Duke University Press, 2023) is based on ethnographic research and filmmaking conducted with Muslim communities in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Her [films and video installations](#) have been shown at film festivals, universities, and museums internationally and include *things lovely and dangerous still* (2003), *Best in the West* (2006), *las callecitas y la cañada* (2009), and *Signs of Remarkable History* (2016); she is currently working on two film duets with composer/musician Wadada Leo Smith that examine the ongoing relationships between the struggles for Black freedom, creative music, and spirituality. Kashani is also in the leadership collective of [Believers Bail Out](#), a community-led effort to bailout Muslims in pretrial and immigration incarceration towards abolition.

**Atif Khalil, University of Lethbridge ([atif.khalil@uleth.ca](mailto:atif.khalil@uleth.ca))**

Atif Khalil is Associate Professor in the Department of Religion at the University of Lethbridge (Alberta, Canada) where he chairs the Khan Endowment for the Study of Islam. He is the author

of *Repentance and the Return to God: Tawba in Early Sufism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2018) and almost forty academic articles on the ethical, mystical, and philosophical traditions of Islam. He is co-editor of *In Search of the Lost Heart* (Albany: SUNY, 2012) and *Mysticism and Ethics in Islam* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 2022). At present, he is writing a monograph on the virtue ethics of Ibn 'Arabi and another one on *dhikr* in Sufi thought and practice. In 2009 he obtained his doctorate from the Center for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto.

**Abdoulaye Ndiaye, New York University ([an1490@stern.nyu.edu](mailto:an1490@stern.nyu.edu))**

Abdoulaye Ndiaye is an Assistant Professor of Economics at New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business and a Research Affiliate at the Centre for Economic Policy Research. His research centers on macroeconomic aspects of inequality, specifically in the areas of public finance and labor economics. Originally from Senegal, he completed his undergraduate education at École Polytechnique in Paris and earned his Ph.D. in Economics from Northwestern University in 2018. Following this, he was a Research Economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.

**Asma Sayeed UCLA ([sayeed@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:sayeed@humnet.ucla.edu))**

Asma Sayeed is Associate Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures and Co-Director of the Islamic Studies program at UCLA. Her primary research interests include early and classical Muslim social history, the history of Muslim education, the intersections of law and social history, and women and gender studies. Her book, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), analyzes Muslim women's transmission of *ḥadīth* (teachings from Prophet Muhammad) from the rise of Islam to the early Ottoman period. Her current project deals with contemporary Islamic higher education with a focus on Morocco. She is passionate about participating in interdisciplinary collaborations in Islamic Studies especially ones which promote deeper understanding of Islam and Muslims through art and cultural production.

**Ermin Sinanovic, Shenandoah University ([orc77@su.edu](mailto:orc77@su.edu))**

Ermin Sinanović is the executive director of the Center for Islam in the Contemporary World (CICW) at Shenandoah University, where he is also a Scholar in Residence. Before joining CICW, he was the director of research and academic programs at the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). Prior to that, he taught in the Department of Political Science at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. He studied for an MA and a PhD in Political Science at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University. He obtained a BA in Qur'an and Sunnah Studies and an MA in Islamic Civilization from the International Islamic University Malaysia. His research interests include transnational Islamic revival, Islamist activism, politics of Southeast Asia, contemporary Islamic thought, and institutionalization of Islam in the Balkans and Southeast Asia. He speaks Bosnian, English, Arabic, and Malay.

**Fatima Van Hattum ([fatima.vanhattum@gmail.com](mailto:fatima.vanhattum@gmail.com))**

Fatima van Hattum completed her PhD in Educational Thought and Sociocultural Studies at the University of New Mexico and works as Program Co-Director of New Mexico's statewide women's foundation. She holds an MSc in Globalisation and Development Studies from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). She is also a published poet and satirical cartoonist. She was born and raised Muslim in Abiquiú, New Mexico.

**Ahmet Alibasic, University of Sarajevo**

Ahmet Alibasic is a Professor of Islamic civilization at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Sarajevo. He has been one of the editors of the Yearbook of Muslims in Europe (Brill) since 2009, and recently published Principles of Good Governance in Islamic Tradition and The Arab Spring, 'Ulama', and Muslim Intellectuals (in Bosnian). He has been involved with the Building Bridges seminar since 2005.

**Muhammad Suheyl Umar, Iqbal Academy**

Muhammad Suheyl Umar, Professor of Social Sciences, specializes in Philosophy, Language and Literature (English, Urdu, Arabic and Persian), Comparative Religion, Islamic Spirituality, Interfaith Dialogue, Religion and Science Interface, Iqbal Studies and Islamic Intellectual History. Well versed in Urdu, English, Arabic, and Persian, he has contributed a number of articles on Islamic and literary themes to the reputed academic journals apart from publishing works in English, Urdu and Persian on Iqbal, Islamic Studies, literature and Sufism. He is an accomplished translator of three languages and a computer beurucrate who has produced two Software Programmes (one of these is still the only True Multilingual Library Software in the world) besides doing all the Urduvization of Microsoft Office and Microsoft Windows. Before starting his career at the Iqbal Academy he was a consultant to Suhail Academy, a publishing enterprise renowned for the high degree of accuracy, neatness and beauty of its English, Arabic and Persian reprints. Since 1984 he has worked with the Iqbal Academy Pakistan, a government research institution for the works and teachings of Iqbal, the poet Philosopher of Pakistan, first as Deputy Director and then as Director of the Iqbal Academy for the last thirty years.

## **About the Center**

The AbuSulayman Center for Global Islamic Studies' strategic location allows the center to draw on unparalleled resources to advance its mission in research, education, and professional opportunities for current and future scholars of Islamic studies. Through conferences, workshops, lectures, and other events, it is able to engage in community outreach with one of the most diverse populations in the country.

### **Mission**

The mission of the AbuSulayman Center for Global Islamic Studies is to advance a sound and nuanced understanding of Muslim societies and the Islamic faith, its role in world history, and its current patterns of globalization. The center recognizes that Islam is a universal faith and a world civilization with a global community. Thus, the center provides a global, rather than regional, framework for exploring Islam.

The AbuSulayman Center for Global Islamic Studies supports research, interdisciplinary academic programs, and community outreach. By providing educational and research opportunities for students, faculty, and visiting scholars, it is helping develop 21st century leaders with a sophisticated understanding of the complex dynamics that shape Muslim communities worldwide.

## **About the John Templeton Foundation**

Our vision is to become a global catalyst for discoveries that contribute to human flourishing.  
Our purpose is to enable people to create lives of purpose and meaning.

### **Mission**

The John Templeton Foundation funds research and catalyzes conversations that inspire people with awe and wonder.

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